

## Proven Tips for Kicking the Cigarette Habit

Cigarette smoking is one of the most addictive and widespread habits in our society. It's also one of the most deadly. Half of all smokers die prematurely. Each cigarette smoked costs the smoker an average of 5 to 20 minutes of life. The good news is that half of all people who have ever smoked have successfully kicked the habit. You can, too. While giving up cigarettes is tough, it is likely to be one of the most rewarding things you ever do. Following are some proven tips to help you along the path to a smoke-free and healthier life.

### Develop a Plan

Giving up cigarettes on a whim is a formula for failure. Because smoking is such a hard habit to break, it's best to make a plan to help you reach your goal. Consider the available options such as self-help groups, individual counseling, relaxation exercises, aversion techniques, hypnotism, and nicotine gum or patches. For specific information on these options, call your doctor or contact the resources listed below. You may also want to talk to successful quitters about what strategies worked for them.

### Have a Support System

A support system is one of the most important tools in giving up smoking. Ask your family, friends and co-workers for their support and patience. Explain that you may be irritable or edgy for awhile. Support programs are another valuable resource. Many hospitals offer low-cost or free programs featuring a combination of lectures, behavioral management techniques and peer support.

### Quit Cold Turkey

Most former smokers kicked the habit by quitting cold turkey. Cutting back gradually just reinforces the habit, and switching to lower tar brands usually leads to smoking more cigarettes or inhaling more deeply. Once you've stopped, don't fool yourself into believing you can have "just one" cigarette. One will inevitably lead to another, and before long you'll be back to your old habit.

### Be Positive

Those times you're tempted to light up, stop and think about the benefits you are gaining by not smoking. For example, you're breathing more easily now, your senses of taste and smell are returning to normal, and you no longer smell bad. You're also dramatically reducing the risk of developing cancer or heart disease and, all the while, saving a sizable amount of money that you used to spend on cigarettes.

### Keep Trying

Don't give up hope or worry about what others think, even if you slip. Most smokers try several times before successfully kicking the habit. Relapses are most common within the first three months of quitting because people aren't prepared for high-risk situations such as traveling, parties, or emotional upsets. If you do slip, think about what made you start smoking again, then take steps to avoid making the same mistake next time.



## Support Others Trying to Quit

Once you've quit, don't preach to others who are still smoking. Remember, you're only one puff away from a pack a day. Focus on your own recovery and stay alert to the influence of smokers around you. Let your smoking friends and relatives know that they have your support, and praise them for even the smallest efforts to quit.

## Remember . . .

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you and your eligible dependents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All services are confidential and provided at no cost to you. Visit today at <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/other/eap/Assist.shtm>.

# Good Reasons To Quit Smoking

Sometimes it's OK to be a quitter. In fact, when it comes to smoking cigarettes, quitting is the best thing you can do. Here are just a few of the reasons why:



- A pack-a-day smoker deposits about eight ounces—that's one full cup—of tar into his or her lungs each year.
- Smoking decreases the flow of blood to the skin, making it wrinkle more. Many smokers develop a grayish complexion, deep lines around the corners of the mouth and eyes, and a gauntness of facial features.
- Smokers in their 30s and 40s have five times as many heart attacks as nonsmokers. Smoking causes 40,000 heart attacks every year among Americans in this age group alone.
- Smokers spend 27% more time in the hospital than nonsmokers, and more than twice as much time in intensive care units.
- Inhalation of secondhand smoke is the third greatest cause of lung cancer and results in an extra 3,000 lung cancer deaths each year among adults in the United States.
- Nonsmokers who live with a smoker are 30% more likely to develop lung cancer than those in smoke-free households.
- Secondhand smoke causes between 150,000 and 300,000 respiratory infections each year among children under the age of 18 months. Asthma is twice as common in children exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke as in those not exposed to secondhand smoke.

### Resources

American Cancer Society	1-800-227-2345
American Heart Association	1-800-242-8721
American Lung Association	1-800-586-4872
Cancer Information Service	1-800-422-6237

### Literature

*Hooked But Not Helpless*, by Patricia Allison with Jack Host.  
*The No-Nag, No-Guilty, Do-It-Your-Own-Way Guide to Quitting Smoking*, by Tom Ferguson, M.D.  
*Quitting Smoking: Common Errors*, by Marlene M. Maheu, Ph.D., 1994.

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